

OGL 220: Behavioral Dynamics in Organizations

Module 2: EI and Empathy Worksheet

Emotional Intelligence Instruments

Reflect on what you learned about the concept of emotional intelligence based on what you read in your textbook and online. Based on your results with the EI tools, summarize your results and discuss your strengths and weaknesses with respect to emotional intelligence.

Then discuss the concept with a loved one, friend, or trusted colleague. What are their perceptions with respect to your self-appraisal?

Your Answer:

The first tool that I used had me identifying facial expressions, and I found that test remarkably interesting. There were a few expressions that tripped me up because I feel there are subtle differences between how we may express some emotions (i.e., bashful smiles vs flirtatious smiles), but overall, I correctly identified 17/20 facial expressions correctly, and I felt good about that. I have always felt as though I am good at "reading the room", so that was not a surprise to me.

The second test was one that made me wonder "am I suffering from self-enhancement bias, because I tend to agree or strongly agree on all of these". I take comfort in drawing from actual experiences that remind me I have shown a large degree of compassion and empathy as a shift supervisor over the past few years. Listening to people is vital to making our workday run smoothly, and it makes me feel good that our partners can turn to me and know they will be heard. If someone wants to "turtle" or be assigned a position that will keep them mostly off the floor and avoiding direct contact with customers, it is generally because something is going on and they really don't know if they have the emotional capacity to deal with the public. We all need a break, and there is no shame in that.

One thing that my partner felt that I may have shown some bias about is being patient and responding with compassion. He points out that I am a very direct and confident person, and sometimes my responses can be put more delicately. I will admit, he has a valid point. I have clear expectations, but I also encourage open communication. I can generally tell when someone is going to be a little more sensitive to criticism, but have a strong sense of fairness and know that being sensitive does not exclude someone from constructive feedback. One suggestion he made was leading with questions when

trying to evaluate why a partner is struggling, such as "How do you feel like things are going over here? What do you need to help you feel better about it?"

Question 2

Radical Experiment in Empathy

What did you think of the "Radical Experiment in Empathy" video? Were you able to "step outside of your thoughts and behavioral patterns" and reserve a part of your mental capacity to "listen" to and monitor your internal reactions as a means of gaining a deeper insight into the nature of yourself? What's your perspective on this notion of "self-awareness" in the present moment as a tool to learn more about yourself? Was this "radical experiment" an effective one in terms of helping you understand the concept of empathy?

Make some connections between the "Radical Experiment in Empathy" TED Talk and the ideas you have been reading and learning about this week. Be sure to describe your connections carefully and use in-text cites as applicable.

Your Answer:

Oh, this TED Talk. To say that it speaks to me is an understatement. It was a very similar lecture that began to peel back my empathy blockers in my twenties. Raised conservative Christian, there were a lot of things I thought about politics and foreign policies that absolutely shock me now. The comparison of Chinese coal exporters putting Americans in the same position that America has put the Middle East was compelling, and I hope it spoke to us all regardless of how we see politics. Because these people are not politics, they are people. It is sad that we are so quick to put everyone in a larger category just to find a lack of empathy easier to swallow. As I read in the opinion piece "Empathy is Actually a Choice", "ONE death is a tragedy. One million is a statistic." (Cameron, Daryl, et al. "Empathy Is Actually a Choice." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 10 July 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/12/opinion/sunday/empathy-is-actually-a-choice.html>Links to an external site..)

I am grateful to be capable of stepping into someone else's shoes to try to see things from other perspectives. I may never know what it is like to be a race that faces discrimination in America, but I can listen to the stories of those who do and get some insight into their world. Likewise, I cannot truly know the horrors of a war-torn country, but I can learn from someone who does. And as was said at the end of the video - if we can go that far, imagine how far we can go in understanding why a co-worker was late for work or an employee has missed a lot of work. I can certainly be understanding and open-minded towards the people in my everyday life.

Interestingly, it makes me wonder about the connection between empathy and emotional contagions. In 7.4 it is pointed out that negative and positive emotions can be contagious, and I have always found this to be true. As a child I always cried when one of my sisters would cry; I have always cried when people or animals die in movies. When we are talking about this in a workspace, we are thinking of it more along the lines of "positive energy breeds positive attitudes", but there is not a huge difference in feeling empathetically deflated when a co-worker is suffering severe tragedy or loss and everyone being grouchy because the boss did not get their coffee and is acting like an unholy terror. It is still emotional transference. It might be a spiteful sort of empathy, but is it a form of empathy?